



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## JUSTIFY BREEZES HALF-MILE IN :46.80 AT CHURCHILL DOWNS FOR BELMONT STAKES

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Tuesday, May 29, 2018)** – Undefeated Kentucky Derby (Grade I) and Preakness Stakes (GI) winner **Justify** tuned up his preparation for the June 9 Belmont Stakes (GI) with a rapid half-mile breeze in :46.80 Tuesday morning at Churchill Downs.

With Hall of Fame trainer **Bob Baffert** on hand, Justify breezed at 7:30 a.m. with California-based jockey **Martin Garcia** aboard through splits of :12, :23.60 and :35.20 before galloping out five furlongs in :59.60 over the “fast” main track, according to Churchill Downs clocker **John Nichols**. Light rain fell during the breeze.

“He worked really well,” Baffert said. “The trackman (**Jamie Richardson**) did a great job with the track this morning with some impeding rain. Martin knows how to breeze the horse so I flew him in from California. (Justify) warmed up really nice. I basically didn’t say anything on the radio to Martin after I asked him how he was warming up. He went in a nice groove.

“We let him gallop out a little further past the five-eighths pole, he took a big breath and turned around to go back to the barn. I’m really happy. It’s what you want to see. I knew yesterday the way he galloped he was ready to do something. The day before he didn’t get to do much with the rain and he may not get to do much this week because of (possible) rain as well.

“American Pharoah looked like that. That’s what you want to see with another week to go before the Belmont. He looked really good and in great shape. He’s moving forward and held his weight for being a massive horse. I went to see Pharoah yesterday. He got really big and I was really emotional when I was there. I asked him if it was okay if another horse broke his record and he didn’t seem to have a problem with it.”

After the workout, Baffert was scheduled to return to his California home but will return to Louisville later this week before Justify’s final breeze in advance of the Belmont Stakes.

“I’ll head back to California today and come back either late Saturday or Sunday and possibly breeze on Monday before we leave for New York Wednesday (June 6).”

Also stabled in Baffert’s Barn 33 at Churchill Downs is Belmont probable **Restoring Hope**, who breezed seven furlongs from the five-furlong pole in 1:26 with jockey **Florent Geroux** aboard.

The Wood Memorial (GI) third-place finisher worked through splits of :13.20, :25.60, :37.40, 1:01.80 and 1:13.80 before completing a one-mile gallop out in 1:40.20, according to Nichols.

“I thought he worked really well,” Baffert said. “He’s a really competitive horse and is honest on the track. We were disappointed how he ran in the (May 5) Pat Day Mile but I don’t think he liked the sloppy track.”

Other locally-based Belmont Stakes contenders training during the exclusive 7:30 a.m. training window were Preakness runner-up **Bravazo**, who galloped 1 ½ miles for Hall of Fame trainer **D. Wayne Lukas**, and fellow Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen**’s Preakness third **Tenfold**, who galloped about 1 ½ miles.

**Free Drop Billy**, stabled in trainer **Dale Romans**’ Barn 4 at Churchill Downs, had a scheduled walk day following his :59.60 five-furlong breeze Monday.

Justify is scheduled to walk the Barn 33 shedrow Wednesday morning and could return to the track as early as Thursday.

Only 12 horses have swept the Triple Crown: **Sir Barton** (1919), **Gallant Fox** (1930), **Omaha** (1935), **War Admiral** (1937), **Whirlaway** (1941), **Count Fleet** (1943), **Assault** (1946), **Citation** (1948), **Secretariat** (1973), **Seattle Slew** (1977), **Affirmed** (1978) and, most recently, the Baffert-trained **American Pharoah** (2015).

The Belmont Stakes field could possibly be comprised of the following 11 horses (with trainer): **Bandua** (Dermot Weld), **Blended Citizen** (Doug O’Neill), **Bravazo** (Lukas), **Free Drop Billy** (Romans), **Gronkowski** (Chad Brown), **Hofburg** (Bill Mott), **Justify** (Baffert), **Noble Indy** (Todd Pletcher), **Restoring Hope** (Baffert), **Tenfold** (Asmussen) and **Vino Rosso** (Pletcher).

To watch Justify’s Tuesday morning breeze, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMqXP7NO7yI>.

For complementary Belmont Stakes past performances courtesy of Brisnet.com, visit <http://www.brisnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/BelmontStakes18.pdf>.

**FANS CAN WATCH JUSTIFY TRAIN IN PERSON OR ONLINE** – With unbeaten Triple Crown hopeful **Justify** and four other possible Belmont Stakes contenders stabled on the grounds, Churchill Downs Racetrack is conducting a special 7:30-7:40 a.m. (all times Eastern) training period for those horses.

Area horse racing fans are invited to watch those colts train from the first floor of the facility free of charge. Churchill Downs Racetrack will open its Paddock Gate entrance between 7-8 a.m. each morning so the public can watch Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner **Justify** along with rivals **Bravazo**, **Free Drop Billy**, **Restoring Hope** and **Tenfold** prepare for the 1 ½-mile third jewel of horse racing's Triple Crown – the 150<sup>th</sup> running of the \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (Grade I) on Saturday, June 9.

Guests may park free of charge in the Orange and Black Lots outside of the Paddock Gate.

Video of the exercises will be shown on the Big Board and infield video screens at Churchill Downs. Those unable to attend can watch an online live stream of the daily exercises with commentary on the Kentucky Derby Facebook ([www.facebook.com/KentuckyDerby](http://www.facebook.com/KentuckyDerby)), Twitter ([www.twitter.com/kentuckyderby](http://www.twitter.com/kentuckyderby)) and at [www.KentuckyDerby.com/Works](http://www.KentuckyDerby.com/Works) from 7:20-7:45 a.m., thanks to **TwinSpires.com**, the country's leading online and mobile betting platform and official betting partner of Churchill Downs, the Kentucky Derby and Breeders' Cup World Championships. Also, clips of the activity will be uploaded on the Kentucky Derby YouTube channel.

**WILBO TOPS \$100,000 ARISTIDES STAKES ON SATURDAY'S 'DOWNS AFTER DARK' CARD** – **Chris Wilkins'** multiple stakes winner **Wilbo** heads a competitive field of seven older sprinters that were entered in Saturday night's 30<sup>th</sup> running of the \$100,000 Aristides Stakes (Grade III) at Churchill Downs.

The six-furlong Aristides, named after the first Kentucky Derby winner in 1875, is the first of two stakes events on Saturday's 11-race Downs After Dark Presented by Budweiser program. The first race is 6 p.m. (all times Eastern). The Aristides goes as Race 10 at approximately 10:42 p.m. and the third running of the \$75,000-added Mighty Beau Overnight Stakes, a five-furlong turf sprint, is Race 11 at approximately 11:10 p.m.

Trained by two-time Aristides-winning trainer **Chris Hartman** (note: he won the 2015-16 Aristides with millionaire **Alsvig**), **Wilbo** most recently finished second behind **Whitmore** in the \$400,000 Count Fleet Sprint Handicap (GIII) at Oaklawn Park on April 14. **Wilbo** was the runner-up in the 2017 Aristides behind multiple Grade I winner **Limousine Liberal**. The 6-year-old gelding previously won the 2017 Don Bernhardt Stakes at Ellis Park and the Feb. 3 King Cotton at Oaklawn. Jockey **David Cabrera** is scheduled to travel from his spring base at Prairie Meadows in Iowa to Kentucky for the mount and will break from Post 3.

Chief among **Wilbo's** challengers is impressive allowance winner **Mr. Crow**. Trained by **Ben Colebrook**, who won the 2017 Aristides with **Limousine Liberal**, **Mr. Crow** was victorious by two lengths in a six-furlong allowance race on May 1 at Churchill Downs with a swift final time of 1:09.24. **Corey Lanerie** picks up the mount on **Mr. Crow** and will break from Post 5.

The Aristides filed from the rail out (with jockeys and assigned weights): **Smart Spree** (Ricardo Santana Jr., 120 pounds); **Shadow Tracer** (Robby Albarado, 120); **Wilbo** (Cabrera, 122); **Heartwood** (Calvin Borel, 120); **Mr. Crow** (Lanerie, 120); **Awesome Saturday** (Brian Hernandez Jr., 120) and **Chief Cicatriz** (James Graham, 120).

Churchill Downs admission gates will open Saturday at 5 p.m. General Admission is \$10, reserved seating is \$25 and reserved dining packages start at \$73. Tickets can be purchased in advance online at [ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets](http://ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets). Guests are encouraged to dress in bright, neon colors for the theme "Neon Nights."

**MULTIPLE GRADED STAKES WINNER HOGY HEADLINES COMPETITIVE MIGHTY BEAU** – **Michael Hui's** multiple stakes-winning gelding **Hogy** headlines a field of 10 that were entered in Saturday night's third running of the \$75,000-added Mighty Beau Overnight Stakes for 3-year-olds and up at five furlongs on Churchill Downs' Matt Winn Turf Course.

The Mighty Beau, carded as Race 11 at approximately 11:10 p.m. (all times Eastern), is named in honor of Oklahoma-bred **Mighty Beau**, who boasted a record of 75-12-19-10—\$646,000 from 2001-08 and made a record five starts in the Twin Spires Turf Sprint (then known as the Aegon Turf Sprint) from 2002-06. The 11-race card on Downs After Dark Presented by Budweiser also features the 30<sup>th</sup> running of the \$100,000 Aristides in Race 10 with a post time of 10:42 p.m. The first race is 6 p.m.

A former \$80,000 claim by trainer **Mike Maker**, **Hogy** (51-19-13-6—\$1,323,337) began his 9-year-old campaign with a 2 ¼-length win in the Frontier Utilities Turf Sprint Stakes at Sam Houston on Jan. 28 and then won the Canadian Turf (GIII) at Gulfstream Park by 3 ¾ lengths on March 3. **Hogy** tested the one-mile distance on April 13 at Keeneland in the Makers 46 Mile (GI) but tired to finish ninth. **Hogy**, who will make his 52<sup>nd</sup> start Saturday, drew Post 10 with **Corey Lanerie** aboard.

The Mighty Beau field from the rail out (with jockeys and assigned weights): **Morticia** (Hernandez, 116 pounds); **Cutler** (Melissa Zajac, 116); **Long On Value** (Geroux, 121); **Angaston** (Shaun Bridgmohan, 116); **Sonic Boom** (Julien Leparoux, 121); **The Critical Way** (Adam Beschizza, 121); **Restless Rambler** (James Graham, 121); **Fort Fortitude** (David Cabrera, 123); **Kid Perfect** (Ricardo Santana Jr., 121); **Hogy** (Lanerie, 125).

**DOWN THE STRETCH** – After dark days on Tuesday and Wednesday, racing at Churchill Downs will continue on Twilight Thursday with an eight-race program at 5 p.m., highlighted by \$1 beer, local food trucks and blues music by **Laurie Jane and the 45s**. ... Thursday will showcase a massive \$672,486 carryover in the 20-cent Single 6 Jackpot that gets underway in Race 3 at 5:58 p.m.